

# THE ASYLUM

*Quarterly Journal of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society*

Volume II, No. 3

Summer, 1984

## *Inside:*

Whatever your bibliographic interests, you'll find our feature article by **Dr. Kirby W. Brown** to be educational, entertaining, et entitled, "**Eloquent Expositor Enthralls Energumen, Explicates Embossed Elzevir Editions.**" Or, in plain English: That 'silver-tongued devil' explains different, rare, embossed coin books. (Well, it was a speech, and the bibliomaniacs did like it!) His encyclopedic enterprise ensues on. . . . .page 5.

**NBS President, Cal Wilson**, says, "**We ain't dead yet!**" Wilson takes a look at the Society's short history, some of its problems, then shares with us his thoughts about the future. . . . .page 3.

From across the Atlantic we have a brief article from **Reinhold Jordan**, 'our man' in Schweinfurt, W. Germany. (Yes, biblionutz are found 'round the world!) Hopefully, you'll read more of Reinhold's very good English in the next issue, or so. Now, he's on. . . . .page 4.

**Mike Carter**, a friend and another native Floridian, who now lives in that other 'sunshine state,' writes about another strange book, one remotely akin to Dr. Brown's collecting specialty; his article begins on. . . .page 12.

**Wayne Homren** brings a touch of humor to our pages, revealing how he attempted to build his numismatic library while living (that was living?) as a graduate student; apparently he has gained a measure of success, but, we hear, he no longer can afford to eat. . .page 14.

**NO** correspondent can win a written argument with an editor, for the latter always has **The Last Word**, which hints that an editorial might be found on the. . last page.

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THE ASYLUM

Vol. II, #3

Summer, 1984

Editor .... Carling Gresham

Published quarterly by the Numismatic Bibliomania Society,  
with an office at 116 W. Main St., Pomona Park, FL 32081.  
Application To Mail At Second-Class Postage Rates Is Pending  
At Pomona Park, FL 32081. POSTMASTER: Send address changes  
to The Asylum, P.O. Drawer 580, Pomona Park, FL 32081-0580  
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# NBS Alive, Doing Well

By Cal Wilson, Pres., NBS  
Fremont, CA

**TO PARAPHRASE** Samuel Langhorn Clemens, "The reports of our death have been greatly exaggerated." While it's true that The Asylum might well be considered 'among the missing,' the proof of its existence now rests firmly in your hands.

**AS IS** the case with many newly formed organizations, the Numismatic Bibliomania Society has suffered somewhat from growing pains, but we have now overcome those difficulties, and our goal is to become an active and vibrant force within the hobby. With this number, The Asylum will be published on a regularly scheduled, quarterly basis.

**AS YOUR** president for the past year and a half, I've received numerous letters from members, questioning the health of the society.

**DESPITE** a period of relative dormancy since February, 1983, we are still blessed with an evergrowing membership, and now that we have the ship on an even keel, it's my opinion that we'll continue to thrive, and to encourage many more to join the fold.

**EFFECTIVE** with this issue, Carling Gresham has assumed the reins as editor. Jack Collins, who edited previous editions, will continue to provide his able influ-

ence into the publication; however, his publishing ventures, coupled with his newfound profession as a numismatic literature dealer, preclude him from devoting the time necessary to carry the full load.

**PERHAPS** the greatest hurdle an editor faces in emitting a society house organ is accumulating sufficient copy for each issue. As with nearly all such journals, we must depend on our members to provide literary material.

**AS REQUIRED** by NBS By-Laws, the names of all prospective members will be published in The Asylum. In addition, the names of all current members will be published in the next issue.

**WE RECOGNIZE** that there may be some members who joined the society prior to its formal organization, who may wish anonymity; therefore, it's requested that those who desire that their names NOT be published, please contact Carling, and he will list only your first and last initials in the forthcoming listing.

**ON A** personal note, I'll be attending the ANA Convention in Detroit this July, and I'm looking forward to meeting many of our Midwestern members whom I've not previously had the plea-

## New Bibliography from East Germany

By Reinhold Jordan  
Schweinfurt, W. Germany

HELMUT Steinecke, a numismatist of Soemmerda, DDR, has written a most interesting bibliography covering all magazines relating to coins and medals, which have been published in the German language since 1689.

THE book was published by the Kulturbund der DDR, an official organization that East German collectors and scholars must join if they wish to exhibit or publish.

THE bibliography includes a four-page introduction, a list of literature, and a register of publishers and editors.

STARTING with Allgemeine numismatische Blatter, and ending with Zuricher Munzbote, the author mentions 215 numismatic magazines and yearbooks, citing the title, frequency of issue, editor's name, place of pub-

lication, dates of issue, and other pertinent information.

AS THE communist rulers in East Germany try to prevent their citizens from obtaining information from other countries, the author must have encountered many difficulties in gathering the necessary information.

UNFORTUNATELY, the book is not available in the international market, as it was published only for members of der Kulturbund. This notice is for those who might want to record the book's existence.

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Wilson.....

sure of knowing. We'll also be conducting our annual meeting during the convention; details appear elsewhere in this issue.

REMEMBER, The Asylum is YOUR periodical, and it can only prosper through YOUR input. With this in mind, why not sit down and prepare an article, editorial, or anecdote for inclusion in the next issue? ONLY with your help can we continue to publish a high quality journal, which will be cherished by its recipients. Mail all submissions to: Carling Gresham, P.O. Drawer 580, Pomona Park, FL 32081.

### IN MEMORIAM

James (Jim) A. Brown

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# A Study of Embossed Coin Books

By Kirby W. Brown, PhD.  
Stockton, CA

(This is an abridgement of a speech delivered during the ANA Convention in San Diego last year, courtesy the editor of Coin World, edited in Pomona Park.-Ed.)

THERE are really two major sources of pleasure in a collecting hobby: one is the collecting or acquisition...the 'hunt'...and the research on the particular thing you're interested in, be it coins, books, or whatever.

THE other major pleasure is sharing your interests with other people, sometimes in a one-on-one conversation, through exhibits, or with a paper such as this one.

ABOUT six years ago, I began collecting books seriously. I've been a collector of rather unusual types of coins, from ancient Chinese to modern Islamic. As most readers know, one must have a sizeable library to research and attribute such kinds of coins.

SEVERAL years before I began collecting books I sold all of my coins and most of my coin references to help pay for that 'dream house' in the country. However, the collecting instinct was always there, and when everything settled down, I longed to get back into the

numismatic area.

WHILE visiting a friend, Harvey Hurtt, in Berkeley, Calif., he showed me an embossed, illustrated book, and I was absolutely captivated by it. I bought the book, and one could say that from that moment on, I was 'hooked.' And how!

EVER since, I've been pursuing embossed coin books from several angles. One is, of course, acquiring as many titles and editions as I can find. Beyond that is researching how such books were made, and determining what titles exist.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES, and even many auction catalogs don't state what kind of plates a book has. Tracing the various editions of such books has been interesting.

DURING the last ANA Convention I learned the meaning of the 'mania' in bibliomania. I hadn't intended to make any purchases at that affair, however, one day, while walking the bourse floor, a little book among 'things' in a dealer's case caught my eye.

I LOOKED a bit closer, and my heart jumped into my throat! It was an embossed book I had never seen or heard of before; without hesitation I bought it.

THERE'RE many reasons why I



Brown.....

like these books, but perhaps illustration number 1 can sum it for me: you'll note in the center of the plate one of the world's most beautiful coins, a decadrachm of Syracuse.

WHILE it looks very real, that is not the actual coin in the photograph, but an embossed illustration from Henry Noel Humphrey's Ancient Coins and Medals. It's incredible!

OF COURSE, I can't afford to collect such a coin, but I've 'got' that one in my collection, and literally hundreds of other equally rare and expensive specimens. So, while not collecting the actual coins, those in my books allow me to see and feel the 'real thing.'

THERE'RE other reasons for collecting these books, which relate to book collecting in general. There's nothing like the fine bindings of many of the earlier books; hand-tooled leather with beautiful, marbled end papers. I understand that the swirls were created by a hand process, not like the modern books of mass production methods.

PEDIGREE is of a particular concern. Unlike coins, many books often bear the signatures or bookplates of one or more owners. I have a colorful bookplate of Nelson T. Thorson, president of the ANA from 1933-1935.

ANOTHER bookplate from the



Plate 1.

Embossed illustration from Humphrey's Ancient Coins and Medals. (See text.)

Robinson Collection in the Essex Institute ties into a published bibliography, giving a long lineage to that book. Illustrious numismatic organizations, such as the ANS, sometimes consign their duplicates to auction and it's a pleasure to own such a book.

AFTER I 'innocently' began collecting embossed coin books, another branch of collecting developed. In order to learn about embossed books, I needed auction catalogs and bibliographies. This, of course, led me to the huge area of collecting



Brown.....

catalogs with numismatic book offerings.

A BIG question that has intrigued me is, 'How were these books made?' There aren't any being made now, as it's essentially a lost art. The text in the books seldom gives any information; one must examine very closely the plates to learn which process was used.

THE simplest method to make an embossed illustration is to use the same dies from which the coins or medals are made. This method was used to produce the first ever embossed coin book, Thomason's Medallic Bible, which was printed in England between 1830 and 1840.

THE majority of books on my list, 24 of 31, were made by an electrotpe process, e.g., the replica dies were made from electrotypes of the coins themselves. This method achieves a very high level of accuracy, which exceeds photography in the fidelity of portraying the coins.

THE most primitive method of electrotpe embossing is simply to stamp the paper without coloring it. Two books published in 1845 and 1850 were illustrated in this manner.

THE next step in electrotpe embossing is very complex. The paper is stamped first, then a metal foil shell is stamped then glued

over the paper impression. This method was used for three books published between 1849 and 1851.

THE most common kind of electrotpe embossing was colored with metallic ink; 19 books from 1850 to about 1915. Apparently the ink consisted of finely ground gold, silver or copper in some sort of emulsion. The silver often tarnished like a real silver coin, but frequently it toned to attractive colors.

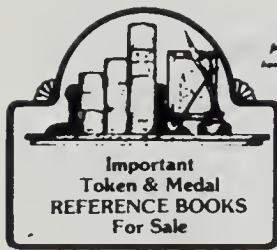
THE last major category, which is sort of a 'step-son,' is what I call 'new engravings.' These were produced by artisans looking at a coin, or a picture of a coin, and making an engraving of the coin. These illustrations are not as satisfactory as the electrotypes.

ILLUSTRATIONS using metallic ink are almost as close to a realistic representation of the coin as is the foil method.

AS ONE may gather, I'm sold or 'hyped' on electrotpe embossings, for I believe they're far superior to anything being done today.

THE second photograph will support my belief; the left side of the illustration is from a slick, color auction catalog, shot through a microscope at 25X magnification. About all you can see is a jumble of dots.

(Continued on Page 10)



A.N.A.  
Table  
662

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<b>THE PROVINCIAL TOKEN COINAGE OF THE 18TH CENTURY, (England), Dalton &amp; Hamer</b>	
HB, 1979 reprint, 640p., DD, HN, SR, line drawings	\$75.00
<b>PROVINCIAL COPPER TOKENS BY PYE</b>	
PB, 1975 reprint, HN, SR, woodcuts (English)	\$5.50
<b>MEDIEVAL ENGLISH JETONS, Berry</b>	
PB, 1974, 83p., DD, RN, SR, photos	\$12.50
<b>ENGLISH SILVER TOKEN COINAGE, 1811-1812, Dalton</b>	
HB, 1968 reprint, 63p., DD, PG, HN, SR, photos	\$11.00
<b>CAR WASH TOKENS, Ford &amp; Coffee</b>	
HB, 1974, 110p., DD, PG, SR, some photos	\$7.50
<b>COLLECTING ADVERTISING MIRRORS, Kaduck</b>	
PB, 1973, 56p. Photos, 1982 PG	\$7.00
<b>ADVERTISING TRADE CARDS, Kaduck</b>	
PB, 1976, 108p., Color & B W photos, Intro, General PG. On paper cards	\$10.00
<b>COLLECTING WATCH FOBS, Kaduck</b>	
PB, 1973, 100p. Brief descr., photos, 1982 PG	\$7.00
<b>KU KLUX KLAN TOKENS, Birdsall</b>	
PB, 1981, 40p., 244 photos, 2nd ed., PG, HN, SR	\$5.00
<b>U.S. SALES TAX TOKENS, Schimmel</b>	
PB, 1981, 30p., photos, PG, HN	\$4.95
<b>AMERICAN CENTENNIAL TOKENS BY LINGG, Slabaugh</b>	
PB, 1981, 76p., 600 entries, photos, PG, HN	\$4.95
<b>YESTERDAY'S ELONGATEDS, Martin Dow</b>	
PB, 1981, 298p., DD, PG, HN, SR, photos	\$25.00
Same, Hardbound	\$35.00
<b>BRYAN POLITICAL BADGES, BUTTONS, etc.</b>	
Reprint of 1896 sales catalog, 24p.	\$6.50
<b>FRANKLIN and NUMISMATICS, Bradfield</b>	
PB, 1982, 84p. Numismatist articles	\$8.00
<b>HOBOKEN NICKELS, Rominer</b>	
PB, 1982, 106p., HN, photos	\$8.95
<b>CHRISTMAS TOKENS and MEDALS, Slabaugh</b>	
PB, 1966, 32p., DD, photos	\$3.00
<b>MERCHANT COUNTERSTAMPS, Gould</b>	
PB, 1962, 16p., HN, some photos	\$7.50
<b>MASONIC CHAPTER PENNIES, King</b>	
PB, 370p., 1982 reprint, DD, HN, SR	\$35.00

WORLD'S FAIR

<b>1893 COLUMBIAN WORLD'S FAIR COLLECTIBLES, Rossen</b>	
PB, 1976, 146p., Color, B/W photos, 1982 PG	\$10.00
<b>1893 COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION ADMISSION AND CONCESSION TICKETS, Doolin</b>	
PB, 1981, 22p., color cover, DD, RG, HN, SR	\$10.00
<b>MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS, THE EXONUMIA OF THE 1904 WORLD FAIR, Krueger</b>	
PB, 1979, 88p., Intro, photos, PG, SR	\$15.00

U.S. MEDALS

<b>MEDALS STRUCK BY THE U.S. MINT, THE FIRST CENTURY, 1792-1892, R W Julian</b>	
HB, 1977, 425p., DD, HN, mintages, photos, SR	\$29.95
<b>1982 PRICE GUIDE TO U.S. MINT MEDALS, Hartzog</b>	
PB, 1982, PB, HN, unlisted photos, mintages	\$6.95
<b>THE PRESIDENT'S MEDALS, 1789-1977, Mac Neil</b>	
PB, 1977, 160p. Inaugural Medals Color & B W photos. Detailed HN, mintages	\$9.95
Same, Hardbound	\$13.95
<b>COLLECTORS GUIDE TO PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL MEDALS &amp; MEMORABILIA, Levine</b>	
PB, 1981, 120p., PG, mintages, some photos, HN	\$8.95
<b>AMERICAN COLONIAL HISTORY ILLUSTRATED BY CONTEMPORARY MEDALS, Betts</b>	
HB, 1972 reprint, 365p., DD, HN, PG, SR	\$15.00
<b>THE MEDALS &amp; TOKENS OF HENRY CLAY, Elder</b>	
PB, reprint, HN, brief descr., photos	\$4.00
<b>MEDALLIC PORTRAITS OF WASHINGTON, Baker</b>	
HB, 1965 reprint, 250+ p., DD, PG, notes by Fuld	\$25.00
<b>DICTIONARY of ARTISTS, DESIGNERS, MODELLERS, ENGRAVERS and DIE SINKERS, WHOSE WORKS WERE COMMISSIONED by or STRUCK by THE U.S. MINT, 1792-1977, Fios</b>	
HB, 1983, HN, photos	\$35.00
<b>ASSAY MEDALS and the ASSAY COMMISSIONS, 1841-1977, Fios</b>	
HB, 1983, HN, photos	\$45.00
<b>SPECIAL: DICTIONARY &amp; ASSAY</b>	
	\$55.00

WORLD MEDALS

<b>ART OF THE MEDAL, Jones</b>	
PB, 1979, 192 p. (8 color), HN, photos	
An excellent introduction to medals	\$15.00
Same, Hardbound	\$25.00
<b>THE MEDALLIC PORTRAITS OF SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL, Engstrom</b>	
HB, 1972, 52p., DD, 93 photos, HN, PG, mintages	\$12.50
<b>THE ARCHITECTURAL MEDAL: ENGLAND IN THE 19TH CENTURY, Taylor</b>	
HB, 1978, 244p., HN, SR, 272 photos	\$15.00
<b>THE MEDALLIC PORTRAITS OF A. HITLER, Colbert</b>	
HB, 1981, 160p., photos (265 items), DD, HN, SR	\$13.95
<b>THE MEDALS OF KARL GOETZ, Kienast</b>	
HB, 1980 reprint, 284p., DD, HN, SR	\$36.00
<b>THE FACES OF CAPTAIN COOK, Klenman</b>	
HB, 1982, 85p., DD, HN, SR, 200+ photos	\$40.00
<b>OLYMPIC COINS &amp; MEDALS, Eberhardt</b>	
PB, 1980, 290p., DD, HN, SR (in German)	\$12.50
<b>MEDALS BY GIOVANNI CAVINO, Lawrence</b>	
PB, 1980, 31p., HN, DD	\$7.00
<b>FRENCH MEDALS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM</b>	
HB, 288p., 90 photos, Vol. I: AD 1402 1610	\$75.00
<b>BIOGRAPHIC DICTIONARY of MEDALLISTS, Forrer</b>	
HB, 1980 reprint, 8 vol. set, 5000+ p., HN, photos, line drawings, etc. Highly recommended	\$525.00
<b>BRITISH HISTORICAL MEDALS, 1760-1960, Brown</b>	
Vol. I HB, 1980, 496p., 406 plates, DD, RG. Locations of specimens, Intro	\$125.00
<b>MEDALLIC ILLUSTRATIONS: GREAT BRITAIN &amp; IRELAND</b>	
Oversized HB, 1979 reprint, 183 plates, text	\$115.00

Abbreviations

HB	Hardbound
PB	Paperbound with cover
DD	Detailed Description of each entry
PG	Price Guide
RG	Rarity Guide, no prices
HN	Historical Notes
SR	Standard Reference

catalog numbers used in our terms and by collectors

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Plate 2. Photograph on the left is view of a "typical" color plate, illustrating the screen composition needed to ink the three primary colors (plus black.) Photo on the right is a closeup of an electrotype embossed illustration. These photographs are magnified about 25 times (25X). Note the surface 'grain' of the 'coin' on the right.

ON THE right side of the illustration is a similarly magnified photograph of an embossed coin, which, as you can see, is just like looking at a real coin; the fidelity is that precise.

IT LOOKS as if there were three steps involved in the process: first, the black background was printed, possibly by an inked roller over the paper. Second, a blank, colored disk was printed. Finally, the embossed impression was stamped.

BEYOND that, I really don't

know the details of how the dies were made, or how the plates were printed.

QUESTIONS I hope to answer are: Were the dies backed with lead? What kind of presses were used? How were they grouped together to print a plate? There're other questions, too.

WHY were these books made? is a good question. There were many reasons, but the basic reason is the same as why coin books are made today.

A MAJOR function of many of the books was to aid money

Brown.....

changers and bank personnel in the identification of coins in circulation at the time, and in the detection of counterfeits.

SOME of the embossed books were merely popular books or card albums with pretty illustrations; others were scholarly works, or illustrated coin cabinets.

WHERE were these books produced? is another question of interest. Germany leads with eleven titles; in fact one in English and one in Swedish were printed in Germany, giving that country a total of thirteen. Nine titles were published in England, seven in the U.S.A., two in Austria, and one in France.

WHO made these books? When you gather together several of the books, you discover that just a few groups were responsible for publishing the majority: The Schaefer publishing house in Leipzig Germany, produced nine; the house of Adolph Henze, also in Leipzig, produced four; Barklay's Process in England produced four; and in the U.S.A., Snowden's Mint Manual, the American Bond Detector, and a reissue of its coin plates, derived from Snowden, account for three.

(This article will continue in the next issue, featuring more illustrations, and a 36 line bibliography of all the known embossed books.-Ed.)

PRESIDENT CALLS FOR  
GENERAL MEETING

Orosz Featured Speaker

President Cal Wilson has called a general meeting of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society, to be held at 8:30 p.m., Saturday, 28 July 1984, in the Marquette 'B' room, Westin Hotel, Detroit, Mich.

Joel Orosz, an NBS member, and a staff member of the Public Museum, Kalamazoo, Mich., has accepted President Wilson's invitation to be the guest speaker for the affair; his topic will be the preservation and restoration of books, and the deacidification of paper.

All members are urged to attend, and to take a guest. The meeting will be open to the public.

\*\*\*\*\*  
CLASSIFIED

ELDER auction catalog. June, 1925. The Skilton Collection. Yesterday's standard reference. Coins & medals of the Western hemisphere. Reprint, including PRL, \$15.00. Steve Eyer, Box 321-NBS, Mt. Zion, IL 62549. (217) 864-4321.

-----  
WANTED in any condition if salvageable, any numismatic work of Jose Toribio Medina. Also wanted: Latin American bibliographies containing numismatic citations. Please quote title, condition and price in first letter. Carling Gresham, editor.

-----  
ZAK Collection. Jess Peters, Inc., Sale #100, September 1979. Standard reference on Martin Luther medals and coins. \$15.00, including PRL. Jess Peters, Inc., P.O. Box 123-NBS Decatur, IL 62525.



# Mystery Book Reveals Some Secrets

By Mike Carter  
Beverly Hills, CA

TWO years ago at the Memphis International Paper Money Convention, I purchased a presentation vignette book that is somewhat different than those that are seen normally.

THE overall size of the book is 6-3/4 by 8 inches, and roughly 1/4 of an inch thick. It's bound in full burgundy Morocco leather, and both the front and back covers are tooled and decorated in gold with the official heraldic eagle in the four corners.

AT THE center of both the front and back is again found the heraldic eagle in a larger version tooled into the leather, but ungilted, i.e., 'blind stamped.' Also on the cover below the central eagle is the gilt name of either the presenter or the recipient of the book, William P. Malburn.

THE spine is heavily decorated in gilt with raised bands, and displays the title, Portraits. The edges of the pages are spattered, (i.e., sprinkled.-Ed) purple and the end pages and inside covers are marbled purple with gilt overlays.

THIS magnificent book contains no title page or text hence, this writer is unable to identify many of the individuals.

THE first engraving is the

familiar northeast view of the Whitehouse, which is still printed by the B.E.P. for sale to the public.

FOLLOWING the scene of the Whitehouse are all of the presidents in chronological order from Washington to Wilson, the 28th president.

ANOTHER engraving of the Whitehouse, this time the southeast view, still available from the B.E.P., follows the presidents; then there are various portraits of statesmen, and a few duplicated presidential portraits. The book ends with a southeast view of the Capitol, also available from the B.E.P.

ALL of the engravings are on India paper, die-sunk into cardboard, and many of the portraits are of those found on various issues of U.S. currency.

WILLIAM Peabody Malburn was born on June 7, 1868, and served as the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury by appointment of President Wilson, from 1914 to 1917.

HE WAS VP of the American Exchange National Bank, New

---

When you steal from one author it's plagiarism; if you steal from many, it's research.

...Wilson Mizner



Carter.....

AUTHORS, ATTENTION!

York City, 1919-31, and VP of the Chicago Title and Trust Company, 1933-39.

MALBURN authored two books on commercial banking, What Happened to Our Banks, published in 1934, and The Principles of Commercial Banking, date unknown. He died on April 9, 1945.

I WOULD assume that Malburn was the recipient of the book since it probably was assembled after or just prior to 1917, which year was the last of his term in the Treasury. It was also the last year of Wilson's first term as president.

WILSON'S portrait is the last presidential portrait in the book, leading me to believe that it was presented to Malburn for exemplary service to the Treasury or to the government. Also, I find it difficult to believe that he would have presented the book to someone with his name stamped on the front cover.

IT'S interesting to hold

Editorial copy should be typed, double-spaced on white bond, with a 1.5-inch margin at the top, and 1-inch on the other sides. Please do NOT add proof marks or make corrections, except for dates, spelling of names and places, etc., which the editor would not know.

All Photographs must be identified clearly, but use only a felt marker when writing on the backs of prints. Thank you!

this incredible book and think of whose hands it has passed through.... a president's, a treasurer's.... who knows? But, it's fascinating to think about.

THE book's sheer beauty, and its significance to the currency and official documents issued by the U.S., of which I'm an avid collector, will always make it one of the highlights of my library.

RAILROAD CURRENCY PUBLICATIONS  
By Dr. Muscalus

- 1. Railroad Currency: Bank notes and scrip representative of over one hundred railroads, 1830's-1971. All notes illustrated. . . . \$5.00
- 2. Georgia Railroad Currency Comprehensively Illustrated. 99 illustrations with values. . . . \$5.50
- 3. Mississippi Railroad Currency Comprehensively Illustrated. With 173 illustrations. . . . \$5.50
- 4. Locomotive Engravings on State Bank Notes & Scrip, 1832-1875. Sixty-four illustrations of different locomotive engravings. 1964. . \$5.00
- 5. Early Ships & Shipbuilding on Paper Money. 107 illustrations. . \$5.50
- 6. Transportation Currency: Bank notes & scrip representative of forty-five varieties of transportation companies. 48 illus. 1974. . \$3.00

Historical Paper Money Research Institute  
Box 187, Bridgeport, PA 19405

# Searching for Elusive Coin Books

By Wayne K. Homren

Atlantic Highlands, NJ

EXAMINING my meager collection of coin books a few years ago, I realized that my 'numismatic library' had many large gaps. I quickly sprang into action and drew up a want list.

BEING the good student I was, I realized the value of a good background in the classics. Even though I wasn't actively collecting Large Cents, I'd need a copy of Sheldon's Penny Whimsy, and no library would be complete without Crosby's Early Coins of America. (I thought, A 1st. edition would be nice!)

I HAD all issues of The Numismatist since 1977, so I'd have to pick up all of the back issues. A complete set of the American Journal of Numismatics would look nice on the shelf, too; and maybe a copy of The Story of the American Bank Note Company, plus a few sets of early auction catalogs...

TAKING a deep breath, I totaled the estimated cost. There must be a better way, I thought. So, want list in hand, and armed with my thrifty, i.e., cheap, nature, I set out in search of the 'Ultimate Bargain.'

FLEA markets and garage sales are traditional sources of bargains. Everyone knows someone whose neighbor's aunt bought a

Matthew Brady photograph for 50 cents, or a 13th Century oriental vase for a quarter.

BASED on my experiences, numismatic literature is a bit harder to find. I did, however, manage to pick up Taxay's Counterfeit, Mistrucked and Unofficial U.S. Coins for 50 cents, and a few older 'Red Books' for a similar amount.

PUBLISHER'S close-out sales are another possibility; it isn't often that coin books turn up there, but when they do, they're often great bargains. Several years ago I bought a copy of Bowers' Coins and Collectors that way.

BROWSING through a bookstore more recently, I came across Doty's Money of the World, on sale for \$4.98. It's a beautifully illustrated, 240-page, large-format book. You can't go wrong at that price, so I bought a copy. Before I finished reading it, I went back to the store to buy three more copies to give to friends.

SECOND-hand bookstores are more promising places to look for numismatic books. You might be thinking that they're unlikely places to find numismatic literature, and you'd be right, but you also might be pleasantly

Homren.....

surprised at the quality, price and variety of books you do find there.

FOR example, it was on just such a shelf that I discovered my copy of Willem's, The United States Trade Dollar. The book is a classic, one of the most thoroughly researched numismatic books ever published. It cost me only \$6.00, and was easily worth it.

A FEW weeks later, I discovered an old 'Blue Book' on the same shelf. For a brief moment I considered bargaining on the price, but decided I couldn't go wrong for \$1.50. (I was poor, but not that poor!)

WHEN I got home I checked some recent book auction catalogs, and learned that someone had paid \$75.00 for another copy of the same book...a 1943, second edition of Yeoman's Handbook of United States Coins.

WHEN I was just beginning to buy books, I came across a copy of Valentine's The United States Half Dimes, signed by the author; it

## WARNING!

Smoking near disk drives can be dangerous to the disk's 'health.' Smoke may accumulate on the sensitive disk surfaces and corrupt any information thereon, making retrieval garbled, difficult, or impossible.

Ye Editor,  
Experience

was marked \$25.00. Being both poor and ignorant, I passed it up. A week later, having regained my senses, I returned to the shop, but alas, the book was gone. As graduate students are typically overworked, underfed and exhausted, I dismissed the incident as fanciful hallucination. Thus, the book really wasn't there in the first place.

MY LIBRARY is still missing most of the items on my original want list, but, as you can see, it's much more enlightening, and downright fun, to search them out for yourself.

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## THE LAST WORD

Me and My 64, and Other  
Miscellaneous...

This issue of The Asylum has been typeset on a CBM 64, programmed by an **Omni-Writer**, linked to a Silver-Reed 550 printer.

All of the editorial copy was set using that system. The only ad copy that was done otherwise was Kolbe's ad and Hartzog's centergate spread.

The headlines on the five major articles were set on a typesetting machine by the (human) printer.

You'll notice a variety of composition styles, such as no paragraph indentation on most articles, but used in others, as here.

Some of the type faces will appear bolder, due to different ribbons being used. The ribbon used here and in Bergman's ad is a single-strike Mylar. Most of the balance is printed with a multi-strike Mylar, which appears to the eyes as much bolder. How they'll print, I don't know, which is the purpose of this column.

Do you like 'ragged right' margins, such as this one, or do you prefer justified (flush right)?

One column, as on the front page, or two columns? Which typeface pleases you? This column is set in proportional, (PS,) but most of the editorial copy is set

in Courier 12. The back cover is Courier 10; Dr. Muscalus' ad is Mini Gothic.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have a database program which will allow me to analyze auction results. I'd like to publish the prices realized of most numismatic book auctions that've been conducted over, say, the last 10-20 years.

I haven't participated in every numismatic book auction within that time, so I need lots of help from you, the readers. (Intended!)

If feasible, send copies of your invoices from as many auctions as you can. I'll store the information in the computer program, then return your paperwork.

I'll need: author, title, edition/date, condition, estimated value, and price realized. You may submit as many entries as you like.

Your name will be kept in confidence. If the results are published in book form, which is unlikely, for I prefer to publish in this magazine, you'd receive credit, of course, (if you didn't object to publicizing your name.)

Now, it's your turn!-CG

\* \* \* \* \*

As good almost kill a man  
as kill a good book: who  
kills a man kills a reason-  
able creature, God's image;  
but he who destroys a good  
book kills reason itself.

...John Milton

-NUMISMA-

Reprint of Ed. Frossard's classic house organ, limited to only one hundred numbered copies. Offset from one of the few original sets still intact. Nearly 500 pages. Spiral bound in tan, heavy card covers. One of only a handful of early privately published periodicals to endure as evidenced by its fourteen year lifespan. Filled with informative, interesting and humorous articles and anecdotes. Outspoken and often critical of his contemporaries, Frossard's journal reflects the romanticism and simplicity of the hobby in its infancy. Witness firsthand the scathing pen as it was directed at such luminaries as John Scott, W. Elliot Woodward, the Chapman Brothers, and David Proskey, while at the same time showering its affection toward Edward Cogan, William Strobridge, and S.K. Harzfeld, among others. While of American influence, numerous monographs appear relating to foreign and ancient numismatics. A must for the finest of numismatic libraries. Price: \$128.00, postpaid, while the supply lasts.

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Looked at rightly, the possession of any old book is a sacred trust, which a conscientious owner or guardian would as soon think of ignoring as a parent would of neglecting his child. An old book, whatever its subject or internal merits, is truly a portion of the national history; we may imitate it and print it in facsimile, but we can never exactly reproduce it; and as an historical document it should be carefully preserved.

...William Blades